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President: Mr. Matjila (Vice-President) ..... (South Africa)

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Matjila (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*) (E/2018/61)

(a) Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (*continued*) (E/2018/64)

General debate (*continued*)

1. **The President** invited the ministerial meeting to resume its general debate on the theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies".

2. **Mr. Aseradens** (Latvia), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Economics, said that, during the 2018 session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, Latvia had presented its first voluntary national review, which had been prepared in close cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. His Government sought to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals in development planning and budgeting. The long-term sustainable development strategy, created in 2010, emphasized the importance of people, nature, digitalization and culture. The Government was also working to prepare a new post-2020 national development plan to address the challenges that had been identified by the voluntary national review and would hold open, nationwide discussions on future targets and measures in that connection.

3. Sustainability challenges included transitioning to a more innovative and eco-efficient economy that provided equal opportunities for all people, in both rural and urban settings, to lead better lives. The structural causes of poverty, social exclusion and socioeconomic inequality must therefore be eliminated. As economic growth increased and technologies advanced, it was important to ensure that economies were inclusive by connecting more people to better jobs, providing enabling support, in particular to youth, and offering sufficient social protection. International competition in the labour force and insufficient domestic income opportunities impacted resiliency, economic growth and competitiveness. As a result, one Latvian entrepreneur had designed a website to publish competitive work offers from companies that were willing and able to provide attractive jobs and salaries to emigrants who wished to return. In order to promote innovation and the circular economy, the Government planned to increase investments in research and development, achieve 40 per cent renewable energy consumption by 2020 and halve energy consumption relative to gross domestic product by 2030. In addition, a legally binding circular economy implementation tool had been developed.

4. The success of the 2030 Agenda depended on the willingness of all States to work together to address challenges, including income inequality, migration patterns, climate change and the increasingly unstable global economic and political environment. The international community must strengthen its cooperation with all stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, and the cross-cutting principles of the 2030 Agenda, particularly human rights and gender equality, should continue to guide efforts to achieve common goals. The United Nations played a crucial role in supporting Member States, and Latvia fully supported the ambitious reform of the United Nations development system.

5. **Mr. Tiilikainen** (Finland), Minister of the Environment, Energy and Housing, said that adjusting human activity to respect the limits of the Earth's capacity was a prerequisite for the well-being of societies and economies. Countries must therefore move to a circular economy. Finland was strongly committed to the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and was determined to be carbon neutral by 2045. Its national circular economy road map included more than 60 concrete measures for circularity and resource efficiency.

6. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, policies must be coherent and recognize their interlinkages. The achievement of Goal 6 on water would require more strategic dialogue among the Member States and stakeholders at the United Nations. Furthermore, gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, was paramount, as countries could not reach their full potential without empowering women and girls. While Governments must take the lead in implementing the 2030 Agenda, all stakeholders must participate, including civil society, academia, indigenous peoples, children and youth, the private sector, municipalities and regions. At the national level, over 850 operational commitments to sustainable development had been made by a number of stakeholders, many from private companies. The enormous potential of science, technology and innovation needed to be harnessed to advance sustainable development worldwide. In that connection, his Government was proud to host the new United Nations Technology Innovation Labs.

7. Finland had presented its first voluntary national review in 2016 and planned to present its second in 2020. Beginning in 2019, the national budget would include an integrated description of financial resources allocated to implement the 2030 Agenda, which was an important step in mainstreaming the Goals into all sectoral policies and financial resources. In addition, 50 national sustainable development indicators were used to monitor progress towards the Goals, and the participatory follow-up mechanism provided an opportunity to bring data, trends and challenges into wider public discussions.

8. As the current Chair of the Arctic Council, Finland had chosen to focus on climate change and the 2030 Agenda. The melting of ice and snow in the Arctic amplified the global impacts of climate change and the importance of resilient and sustainable societies.

9. **Mr. Masagos** (Singapore), Minister of Environment and Water Resources, said that the 2030 Agenda provided a framework for national action and international partnership to transform lives. Elected officials must take ownership of the Agenda and work in partnership with citizens, businesses and the international community. In Singapore, people had always been at the centre of development policies. The country's economic transformation had improved lives by providing quality education, health, housing, employment and a clean environment. The Government took a pragmatic approach to policymaking and governance, focusing on outcomes rather than ideology, to foster a harmonious, inclusive and prosperous society.

10. Despite constraints as both a small island developing State and a highly urbanized and densely populated city-State, Singapore had pursued sustainable development since its independence. Economic development had always been balanced with environmental protection and social inclusion. In 2019, the Government would implement an economy-wide carbon tax, without exception, in order to accelerate innovation and energy efficiency and move towards a sustainable, low-carbon future. In addition, the Government pursued a long-term, integrated approach to policy planning and implementation. Given that Singapore was one of the world's most water-stressed countries, significant investments had been made to ensure water resilience and sustainability. As a result, the country benefited from a diversified water supply, relying on imported water, local catchments, desalination and recycled wastewater. Furthermore, policy development and implementation were underpinned by collaborative multi-stakeholder partnerships. The Government had designated 2018 as the year of climate action to increase awareness of climate change, and nearly 250,000 citizens, corporations and civil society organizations had pledged to reduce their carbon footprint.

11. Singapore was strongly committed to partnering with and assisting other countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Nearly 120,000 officials from developing countries had received training under the Singapore Cooperation Programme, which had been established in 1992 to share development experiences. The Sustainable Development Goals represented the collective aspirations of the global community, and their unprecedented ambition and scale required its unwavering commitment. Singapore would therefore continue to work with its friends and partners to improve the lives of people around the world.

12. **Ms. Molewa** (South Africa), Minister of Environmental Affairs, said that ensuring just and inclusive sustainable development required multilateral solutions and collective action by all countries, sectors and actors at the national and international levels.

13. South Africa faced several development challenges. For example, water, agriculture, food and energy systems were vulnerable to climate change; by 2050, 80 per cent of the population would be living in urban areas; and, if not planned for, the current unsustainable consumption and production patterns, together with technological innovations, would profoundly disrupt socioeconomic, labour and industrial systems. The national development plan therefore prioritized addressing poverty, inequality and unemployment while fully integrating sustainable development into policy and programme objectives. Furthermore, the integrated urban development framework policy aimed to promote social inclusion, economic development, climate resilience and the protection of environmental resources. It was fully aligned with existing policies associated with water and sanitation, a diversified and secure energy system, sustainable public transport and a circular waste economy.

14. To achieve a just transition to sustainable development on a global scale, all stakeholders must be fully committed to the means of implementation, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 17, particularly with regard to finance, capacity-building and technical support. The international community must therefore focus on resolving global sustainable development and humanitarian challenges without conflating them with security issues. States must meet the expectations of the Doha Development Agenda, address illicit financial

flows and issues relating to intellectual property and fulfil commitments to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross national income to official development assistance. South Africa reiterated the primacy of multilateralism in advancing the sustainable development agenda.

15. **Mr. Moir Sandoval** (Guatemala), Secretary of Planning and Programming, said that, in June 2018, a volcanic eruption in Guatemala had caused loss of life and over 1.6 billion quetzales in damage to the social and productive infrastructure. While support provided by other countries had complemented national recovery efforts, the disaster had demonstrated that highly vulnerable countries were constantly exposed to risks associated with natural phenomena and climate change and must transition to more sustainable and resilient societies.

16. The Government had made progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda by adapting the Sustainable Development Goals to the national and subnational contexts through an inclusive participatory process. National priorities included strengthening efforts to reduce poverty and extreme poverty; reducing chronic malnutrition, the unemployment rate and inequality; and improving health, education and environmental protection, while strictly respecting human rights.

17. With regard to water and natural resources, 75 per cent of the population had been registered as having access to drinking water in 2014. Nevertheless, more effort was needed to reach 90 per cent by 2032, in line with Goal 6. The Government was committed to comprehensive water management, and the regulatory framework would accelerate progress in guaranteeing water protection, security and supply. Forest area in Guatemala had been 33.7 per cent of land area in 2012, reflecting a loss of over 4 per cent in the preceding 10 years. It was therefore important to employ reforestation techniques using native non-invasive species, and the contributions of civil society organizations with ancestral traditions of conservation could play a significant role in that regard.

18. With respect to affordable and accessible energy, 90 per cent of the country had access to electricity in 2017. Nevertheless, the Government faced challenges in increasing coverage to rural areas, where firewood remained the primary energy source.

19. While the percentage of the urban population living in slums had appeared to decrease, the actual number of people had increased. As a result, land-use planning was being promoted at the local level. The Government had also suggested reviewing Goal 11 in order to prevent poor cities from cropping up on the outskirts of cities and to assess the interdependence of urban and rural areas.

20. With the support of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Government had adapted the 2030 Agenda to national development plans. The Commission also facilitated the exchange of experiences that were relevant to the specific needs of the region. Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme had provided support during national dialogues aimed at increasing ownership and strengthening institutions, with a focus on innovation and technology.

21. **Mr. Da Silva Gonçalves** (Cabo Verde), Minister for Tourism and Transport and Minister for Maritime Economy, said that, while it had been three years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, discussions on the means of implementation still faced considerable roadblocks. Cabo Verde remained firmly committed to implementing its own national development agenda through its sustainable development plan for the period 2017–2021, which was aligned with the 2030 Agenda with a view to building resilience and focusing on the most vulnerable groups to ensure that no one was left behind. Cabo Verde had presented its voluntary national review during the current session of the high-level political forum.

22. In 2008, Cabo Verde had graduated from a least developed country to a lower-middle-income country and had met most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. In order to consolidate those gains and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government would continue to invest in human capital, good governance, justice, energy, health, education, water and sanitation. To promote economic growth and opportunities, the Government was further strengthening its policies and regulatory framework to encourage private investment in key sectors, including tourism, the blue economy, renewable energy and exports of goods and services. It also prioritized the mobilization and effective use of national resources and encouraged entrepreneurship and investment, with an emphasis on women and youth.

23. Nevertheless, as a small island developing State facing severe economic and environmental constraints, national efforts were not sufficient to meet the country's financing needs. The international community must therefore be willing to help fill the financial gap for countries like Cabo Verde. Funding modalities prescribed by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda remained a critical issue for the timely implementation of the 2030

Agenda. The special circumstances of individual countries needed to be taken into account at both the national and international levels. For many States, limited capacity for mobilization and the lack of availability of international funding remained major obstacles to securing the necessary resources to promote national development. Bilateral and multilateral development partners must engage in dialogue to pursue creative solutions to overcome those obstacles, and the United Nations system and other international partners must continue to provide support to mobilize both traditional and non-traditional sources of funding to complement national efforts. Furthermore, there must be a harmonized system to classify countries using clear eligibility criteria.

24. **Mr. Dorji** (Bhutan), Minister of Finance, said that Bhutan accorded the highest priority to implementing the 2030 Agenda, as was evidenced by its participation in the voluntary national review. The Agenda was consistent with his country's national development model, which sought to ensure that peace, happiness and the well-being of people remained at the core of all socioeconomic development efforts. Bhutan had aligned the relevant targets of the Sustainable Development Goals with national plans, including the current five-year national development plan.

25. Bhutan had made considerable progress towards its long-term vision of a just and harmonious society. In keeping with its commitment to leave no one behind, the Government had reduced multidimensional poverty by 5.8 per cent, had maintained income inequality at 0.38 per cent, had achieved 100 per cent school enrolment and had increased access to improved water sources for over 99 per cent of households. Despite those achievements, Bhutan faced challenges stemming from demographic change, pressure on natural resources, economic vulnerability, the impacts of climate change and limited technological progress.

26. As a landlocked least developed country in the Himalayas, Bhutan was vulnerable to earthquakes and severely impacted by climate change. The Government had therefore implemented relevant policies, regulations, strategies and action plans. For example, the Constitution mandated a minimum forest cover of 60 per cent as part of the national commitment to carbon neutrality. The Government had also launched an ambitious initiative to provide sustained financing to maintain protected areas and biological corridors.

27. The international community must come together in mobilizing adequate and predictable financial resources for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Bhutan looked forward to receiving support from its development partners, including civil society and the private sector, in order to make progress in that regard.

28. **Mr. Kiisler** (Estonia), Minister of Environment, said that people and their actions significantly impacted the environment. Larger populations increased consumption, and solid waste generation rates were on pace to exceed 11 million tons per day by 2100. While production systems contributed to human well-being, they should not put undue pressure on the environment. Responsible consumption and lifestyle choices could play a key role in ending environmental degradation. Strong will could also have a significant impact. In 2008, under the "Let's Do It!" campaign, 50,000 people across Estonia had voluntarily come together to clean up the entire country within five hours. On 15 September 2018, people from 150 countries would participate in World Cleanup Day, which was becoming the largest global civic action in human history. He invited everyone to take part and contribute to a cleaner environment.

29. As a driver of change, technological innovation had both positive and negative effects on the environment. For example, motor vehicles and electricity had been two of the most important technological breakthroughs of the twentieth century, but they had had unintended consequences. In contrast, renewable energy and information and communications technologies were helping to address climate change and pollution, increase productivity and reduce material consumption. New innovative technologies, including big data, blockchain and artificial intelligence, improved human well-being and economic growth without harming the environment. Estonia was the first country to use blockchain on a national scale to ensure that networks, systems and data could not be compromised, while retaining 100 per cent data privacy. That technology helped to exchange and store data securely and transparently in areas such as supply chain management, recycling and energy.

30. **Mr. Mejía Alzate** (Colombia), Minister of National Planning, said that, as a result of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, sustainable development was included in agendas at all levels. With few exceptions, Governments, companies and social organizations had strengthened commitments and efforts in that connection. Colombia had ratified the Paris Agreement and had recently presented its second voluntary national review at the high-level political forum, thereby reaffirming its commitment to multilateralism.

31. While poverty and extreme poverty rates had fallen to historic lows in Colombia and throughout the

world, persistent poverty among youth and minority groups, as well as in some subregions within countries, continued to give cause for concern. A stronger effort must therefore be made to close the gap, both between and within countries. Peace and sustainable development went hand in hand. The historic peace agreement signed by Colombia would allow his Government to focus on improving the lives of its citizens, strengthening institutions, building a more productive economy, and ensuring the protection and responsible use of natural resources. The best way to overcome conflicts and prevent outbreaks of violence was to provide opportunities to all people, wherever they were.

32. In joining the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Colombia would continue to improve public policies and accelerate its transition to sustainable development. The Government had developed policy guidelines to promote innovation as the transformative tool that would help to prepare for future challenges. In order to protect natural resources, the international community must accelerate structural change in economies. A green growth strategy would help to focus efforts on productivity and competitiveness.

33. Like the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, countries were interrelated and interdependent. Goal 17 rightly noted that the 2030 Agenda could only be achieved with genuine global partnership. Sustainable development was not a zero-sum game; cooperation, openness, solidarity and generosity were key to building a better present and future for humanity.

34. **Ms. Dostálová** (Czechia), Minister for Regional Development, said that the high-level political forum was crucial to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and there should be increased accountability and stakeholder engagement in its review processes. Regional forums organized by the United Nations economic commissions served as excellent preparatory platforms for the detailed sharing of good practices.

35. With regard to Sustainable Development Goal 15 on life on land, government policies covered all important aspects of terrestrial ecosystem protection, and more than 20 per cent of the territory fell within protected areas. Concerning Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation, her Government was focused on improving water retention in the landscape and rainwater use in households. With respect to Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities, it had introduced a secondary raw materials policy to conserve primary resources, save energy and reduce waste. An integrated approach was applied to urban development, involving various partners at all levels, and the Government cooperated closely with municipalities on affordable social housing. In addition, an increasing number of municipalities were engaged in the local Agenda 21.

36. The Czech Republic supported the smart cities concept with a view to providing new possibilities for building sustainable, liveable and resilient communities. For that reason it had initiated a special meeting of the Council on achieving a transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies, given that sound governance and the participation of all in relevant decision-making processes were crucial to achieving that goal.

37. **Mr. Malmierca Díaz** (Cuba), Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment, said that, three years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, global inequality and polarization persisted and were worsening. The concentration of income and wealth in developed countries contrasted with the underdevelopment and poverty experienced by two thirds of the world's population. The resources to address those scourges existed, as was evidenced by the millions of dollars spent on annual military expenditures globally. However, the most powerful States lacked the political will to fulfil their international commitments. There must be a new world order based on justice, equity and peace. His Government rejected unilateral solutions and attempts to undermine existing multilateral mechanisms. Furthermore, industrialized countries must accept their historic debt and abide by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The achievement of the right to development could no longer be postponed.

38. The devastating impact of the environmental crisis, particularly on developing countries and small island States, continued to pose a serious threat to the very existence of the human species. No country should unilaterally renounce its common international responsibility or forget its ecological debt to humanity and future generations. The international community must consolidate genuine, effective global partnership for development in order to mobilize the resources needed to implement the 2030 Agenda.

39. Given its geographical location, Cuba was highly vulnerable to climate change. As a result, government policies at all levels prioritized the achievement of prosperous and sustainable development with a focus on the human being. However, the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States on Cuba for nearly 60 years caused deprivations for the Cuban people and was the main obstacle to the country's economic development and to

the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Despite those circumstances, the Government was drafting a national social and economic development plan through 2030, which prioritized the issues included in the 2030 Agenda and, in some cases, set more ambitious goals. People from all sectors of the population had participated in related discussions.

40. Internationalism, humanism and solidarity guided Cuban foreign policy, and the country continued to share its limited resources with other countries, having implemented cooperation programmes in 157 countries in areas including health, education and sports. In addition, tens of thousands of Cuban health workers provided services in 65 countries. Cuba reiterated its full commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda and working toward a more just, equitable, inclusive and resilient world.

41. **Mr. Hamid** (Sudan), Minister of Physical Planning for Khartoum State, said that his Government reiterated its commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda. With regard to Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities, the Sudan set aside 70 per cent of land for housing, in both urban and rural areas. A national housing project had been adopted in 2010 to ensure appropriate, dignified housing for all families, including impoverished and women-headed households. The Government had also established a fund, which operated in all provinces, to provide credit to support dignified housing.

42. The Sudan hosted a number of migrants and refugees, providing them with essential services, and the Government had established regional and international partnerships to combat human trafficking. With regard to internal displacement, it sought to provide resources to support development projects in rural settings, as well as microfinancing and financing for small businesses to improve living conditions and stability so that people could remain in their area of origin.

43. With regard to Goal 6 on water and sanitation, the Government endeavoured to provide drinking water, including through rainwater collection in rural areas. Improvements had also been made to sewer systems and related infrastructure, and garbage was being collected in markets. With regard to Goal 7, the Government was working to provide clean sources of energy by damming rivers. In connection with Goal 15, a law governing environmental protection had been adopted in 2017 to protect biodiversity, combat desertification and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

44. **Mr. Famellos** (Greece), Alternate Minister of Environment and Energy, said that his country was strongly committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda, which provided a new vision for open, responsive and accountable governance and inclusive institutions and societies. The guiding principle of leaving no one behind was at the core of national priorities and shaped policies at all levels. Greece had been hit hard not only by the economic crisis eight years earlier but also by more recent humanitarian refugee crisis. The 2030 Agenda provided a road map that would heal the wounds caused by austerity measures and allow the country to focus on economic policies that contributed to achieving sustainable development. A new social agreement was therefore necessary. The Sustainable Development Goals served as a blueprint for the values that his Government wished to promote at the international level.

45. During the current session of the high-level political forum Greece had presented its first voluntary national review, which had been prepared with the involvement of all government agencies and stakeholder groups. During that process, the Government had seen that more could be achieved by working together and breaking down silos. Greece had achieved most of the Goal 6 targets on water and sanitation. Water management principles were applied at the national level and served to improve cooperation across borders. The Government had also taken bold initiatives to promote peace, stability and progress in the Balkan region.

46. With regard to Goal 7, combating energy poverty and increasing renewables were of particular importance to fostering social cohesion and inclusion, and contributed to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement, to which Greece remained firmly committed. Furthermore, efforts to make cities inclusive and resilient had multiple benefits in terms of climate action. The transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and circular economy was paramount to ensuring environmental protection, creating jobs, combatting unemployment and supporting innovation in waste management.

47. Concerning Goal 15, the Government incorporated biodiversity values and ecosystem services in decision-making in all sectors and had recently increased the country's protected areas, under the Natura 2000 network of the European Union, to approximately 28 per cent of land territory and 20 per cent of territorial waters. In the midst of the evolving humanitarian refugee crisis, the Government also promoted peace, religious tolerance and security across the eastern Mediterranean and South-Eastern Europe.

48. **Ms. Djukic Dejanovic** (Serbia), Minister without portfolio responsible for demography and population

policy, said that, following the 2017 presidential elections, her Government had set out to prioritize the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, adjusting them to the national context. An intersectoral working group had held preparatory and constitutive meetings and had begun to map the Goals. Serbia would therefore present its voluntary national review in 2019. The Government placed particular importance on aligning the Goals with the negotiating chapters of the European Union accession process. In that connection, the working group had met with representatives of the United Nations Istanbul regional hub for the third time in February 2018.

49. Given the need for timely access to high-quality data at all levels, the national statistical office had organized a four-day workshop in June 2018 to map the Goal indicators. In partnership with the German Agency for International Cooperation, the Ministry of Finance had launched a project entitled "public finance reform — financing the 2030 Agenda" in order to increase the visibility of the Goals. In September 2018, Serbia would host a subregional conference to promote progress on the 2030 Agenda, which would follow the United Nations mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support strategy. A government focus group had organized a regional seminar on the Goals for parliaments from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia in May 2018. The Government strongly emphasized the importance of Goal 16, on peaceful and inclusive societies, and Goal 17, on partnerships, and therefore cooperated closely with the United Nations country team and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Serbia.

50. **Ms. Skog** (Sweden), Minister of Environment, said that her country was in a good position to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Its peaceful and democratic conditions, international cooperation and dynamic business climate had created a strong foundation for sustainable development and welfare. The Government continued to value good governance, the rule of law, democracy, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health rights, peace and inclusive societies. Nevertheless, there was still much to be done before Sweden could become truly sustainable, especially with regard to transforming consumption patterns, shifting means of transportation and strengthening ecosystems.

51. Addressing the issue of chemicals and waste was at the core of implementing the 2030 Agenda. Harmful chemicals spread with global trade, endangering lives and the planet. In response, Sweden had partnered with a group of States to launch a high-level alliance for a global agreement on chemicals and waste. Increased knowledge and information throughout the entire value chain, as well as non-toxic material cycles, were key to achieving a circular economy. The management of chemicals and waste must change alongside global trade.

52. Water was a shared resource and a shared responsibility. Currently, more than 800 million people lived without safe drinking water and proper sanitation, and climate change was impacting access to water and marine resources. Improved cooperation was urgently needed to protect the quality and quantity of water and prevent conflicts, especially disputes over transboundary waters.

53. There were real security risks associated with climate change. Sweden had recently organized a debate in the Security Council on climate and security, and in 2017, Sweden and Fiji had hosted the historic United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Work had begun on implementing the commitments made, and Sweden would continue to lead efforts to save the oceans.

54. Lastly, she underlined the importance of new partnerships between the public and private sectors and with civil society, as well as the role of youth in creating better conditions for people to live sustainable lives.

55. **Ms. Ubach Font** (Andorra), Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that, while significant progress had been made in implementing the 2030 Agenda, the international community must be mindful of the fragility of its achievements. Climate change, inequalities, extreme poverty and environmental degradation were just some of the risk factors that directly impacted development capacities. It was therefore imperative to incorporate resilience into development policies.

56. Andorra had a population of 80,000 people but was visited by 8 million tourists every year. Her Government, alongside local authorities, strove to balance sustainability and economic development in an economy that was based mainly on tourism and trade. In line with Sustainable Development Goal 11 on sustainable cities, it had invested in renewable energies and had improved energy efficiency. Environmental awareness among the Andorran people facilitated policies that protected the environment while allowing access to protected areas in order to provide both a high quality of life for citizens and a tourist attraction that encouraged economic development.

57. The Government had conducted national information campaigns and awareness-raising campaigns on mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda in order

to change societal behaviours, with a focus on instilling good practices from early childhood to create a multiplier effect. In that connection, the Government was strongly committed to providing quality education that took into consideration both students and teachers, in line with Goal 4. The education system was competency-based, and respect for inclusion, human rights, diversity and a culture of peace was fundamental. Given that education for democratic citizenship laid strong foundations for resilient societies, the Government also prioritized education in its development cooperation plan.

58. The first voluntary national review of Andorra, presented at the high-level political forum in 2018, had been prepared in collaboration with civil society and the private sector. Similarly, partnerships must be established to implement the 2030 Agenda and involve all stakeholders. In a world that was more interconnected than ever, Andorra would remain committed to the work of the United Nations, as it was only through multilateralism that solutions could and should be found.

59. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia), Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations, said that, following its independence, his country had worked to create a united nation and governance structure that moved away from serving a small, privileged minority and took care of the majority of its people, which meant addressing the debilitating effects of the country's colonial legacy by combating poverty, promoting education and providing clean water and sanitation.

60. With regard to Sustainable Development Goal 6, most of the targets on access to clean water had been met. However, only 54 per cent of households had access to improved sanitation. As a result, his Government was scaling up public investment in sanitation infrastructure and promoting behavioural change regarding hygiene and open defecation. In connection with Goal 7 on energy, 50.4 per cent of households had access to electricity. The Government was committed to increasing investments in renewables, especially solar energy, and called on partners to collaborate on relevant initiatives.

61. With regard to Goal 11 on sustainable cities, skewed land ownership and a lack of serviced land made housing a challenge and resulted in expanding slums on urban peripheries. The Government was accelerating the provision of housing through public-private partnerships and by sourcing financial resources for rural housing initiatives. Furthermore, the Central Bank of Namibia had instituted measures to curb speculation and stabilize the housing market.

62. Concerning Goal 15 on life on land, Namibia had played a leading role in conceptualizing desertification, land degradation and drought and co-chaired the related Group of Friends. Those issues greatly impacted his Government's ability to improve food security. Namibia also continued to champion community participation in the management and conservation of natural resources.

63. Despite the significant progress made under Goal 17 on partnerships, as an upper-middle-income country, Namibia was unable to access much-needed resources. The categorization was misleading, as it was based on gross domestic product per capita and did not take into consideration the highly skewed nature of wealth distribution, reflected in its Gini coefficient. He therefore invited participants to join his Government in a smart, multi-stakeholder partnership to eradicate poverty and ensure that no one was left behind.

64. **Mr. Razafimahefa** (Madagascar), Minister for Internal Affairs and Decentralization, said that he wished to highlight local development, given that local communities played a decisive role in implementing the 2030 Agenda. With regard to resource mobilization, Madagascar had organized a symposium on local financing for francophone countries in sub-Saharan Africa in 2017, which had aimed to explore innovative approaches to increasing national resources and financing for the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with legislative frameworks and participatory budgeting practices. It had also examined the recommendations of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and initiatives to increase national resources. Furthermore, his Government had worked to harmonize mechanisms to transfer finances to decentralized local authorities, and a national tax equalization fund had been established in 2017.

65. In terms of governance, Madagascar had endeavoured to institutionalize local consultative frameworks to ensure the participation and engagement of all stakeholders, including vulnerable populations, in preparing inclusive local development plans. The Government had also prepared a national strategy and programme on local development, which served as the framework for providing assistance and coordinating and localizing relevant sectoral policies. It had also adopted a law governing public-private partnership in 2015 and had created an organization to attend international meetings on decentralized cooperation with a view to promoting economic exchanges between communities. In addition, training modules for local stakeholders were being created to boost local potential. Madagascar was also conducting a study on establishing local governments and had drafted a charter on

decentralization, with a view to improving the coordination of support services.

66. Multilateralism played a key role in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Madagascar therefore welcomed the reform of the United Nations development system, which would strengthen the role of resident coordinators, emphasize national priorities at the local level and ensure that international actions were adapted to national contexts.

67. **Mr. Al-Fayez** (Jordan), Minister of Environment, said that a number of countries had expressed a commitment to full ownership and institutionalization of the Sustainable Development Goals and had shared invaluable lessons learned and experiences during the high-level political forum. For decades, Jordan had demonstrated how investments in human resources and development could translate into prosperity and welfare for all citizens. His Government was setting an example in resilience, by providing for its own citizens as well as the Syrian refugees whom it hosted. The regional crisis and the influx of refugees seeking safety and security in Jordan had strained its limited natural resources, infrastructure, utilities and public institutions. Despite those challenges, Jordan had joined the international community in advancing the 2030 Agenda, having submitted its voluntary national review in 2017.

68. In Jordan, a resilient and prosperous society meant sustaining peace and security, safeguarding development gains, systematically working to reduce all forms of inequality and empowering women and youth. As one of the most water-scarce countries in the world, the water supply was prioritized for human consumption. The country had been able to maintain the security of its energy supply by diversifying sources of imported energy, developing local and renewable energy resources, rationalizing energy consumption and improving efficiency, all of which had significantly contributed to reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Particular attention had been given to improving the resilience of refugee and host communities by implementing energy conservation projects in public institutions, particularly in response to the rising demand for health and education services. Furthermore, the Government had developed a national strategy and action plan for sustainable consumption and production for the period 2016–2025 in the transport, waste management, agriculture and food sectors. The protection and sustainable management of territorial ecosystems remained one of the core environmental objectives for the country, which had received international recognition for successfully preserving its rangeland.

69. More coordinated partnership involving national Governments, donors, multinational institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations must fill the gap in development financing. His Government was committed to working with partners to identify effective financing models to fulfil the ambitions of the Addis Ababa framework. Furthermore, the international community must take into account national contexts in determining Sustainable Development Goals and targets, the means of implementation and indicators to measure and monitor progress. Success would depend as much on the effectiveness of international partnerships as on the ability to translate the Goals into tangible outcomes for cities and societies.

70. **Mr. Chiteme** (Zambia), Minister of Development Planning, said that the seventh national development plan of Zambia had been premised on the principles of sustainable development, integrating approximately 86 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goal targets. Access to water and sanitation services by all segments of the population was critical to eradicating poverty and vulnerabilities, reducing developmental inequalities and enhancing human development. In Zambia, the number of households with access to improved sources of drinking water had increased to 67.7 per cent. In order to address the high rates of sanitation- and hygiene-related morbidity and mortality, especially in rural areas, the Government was implementing a programme to increase the use of improved sanitation facilities and reduce diarrheal diseases among children.

71. With regard to Goal 7, his Government sought to achieve 6 per cent renewable energy by 2021 and 15 per cent by 2030, with a view to diversifying the energy mix and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and overdependency on hydro-powered energy.

72. In connection with Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities, the Government had prioritized decentralization reforms to promote localized governance and planning systems. In order to address the proliferation of slums stemming from rapid urbanization, the Government had implemented a pilot programme to upgrade slums in Lusaka and Copperbelt, with a focus on enhancing access to clean water sources and improved sanitation.

73. Concerning Goal 15, the Government was implementing measures to support rural communities in better managing local resources, with a view to reducing deforestation and unsustainable agriculture expansion, enhancing benefits from agriculture and wildlife and addressing vulnerabilities to climate change. An initiative to plant 1 million trees had also been launched

in an effort to restore ecosystems, promote biodiversity and contribute to economic growth and diversification through sustainable forest use and management.

74. Reporting on the Goals required timely, reliable disaggregated data. The Government was therefore building the capacity of the central statistics office by strengthening the legal framework to support the production of comprehensive statistics. Achieving the Goals also required predictable access to financing, and he appealed to developed countries to honour their commitments in that regard.

75. **Ms. Tunis** (Sierra Leone), Minister of Planning and Economic Development, said that the political atmosphere in Sierra Leone had significantly improved. In April 2018, general elections had been successfully concluded with the peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another. Development partners, including the United Nations, international financial institutions, bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations, had helped to transform the economy and build resilient systems. President Bio had committed to a new direction agenda which was aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the principle of leaving no one behind. The agenda prioritized education, justice, peace and security, and the fight against corruption and illicit financial flows. Her Government was also pursuing an education for development agenda to promote free primary and secondary education, with a focus on the girl child and women's empowerment as a means of addressing the development needs of present and future generations.

76. Following the establishment of a legal aid board to promote justice for the poor, in line with Goal 16, access to legal representation had increased threefold between 2015 and 2017. In addition, the ongoing constitutional review process was addressing a number of issues related to justice, inclusion, peace, security and general service delivery. With regard to Sustainable Development Goal 4, the proportion of children with disabilities enrolled in primary school had increased from 0.48 per cent in 2013 to 26.6 per cent in 2017. In connection with Goals 13, 14 and 15, the national environmental protection agency had implemented recommendations from environmental impact assessments, and the Government had increased the number of environmental officers in key ministries, departments and agencies, as well as the number of district councils trained in environmental issues. In partnership with local businesses, the Government was exploring innovative and affordable housing solutions that used waste plastics and wood in construction, with a view to protecting the environment. Given that disaggregated data was essential to leaving no one behind, the national statistics office had established a fully functional gender unit with assistance from development partners. The Government had also launched a new report on child poverty, which served as a baseline to monitor child deprivation, in line with Goal 1.

77. **Ms. Kim** Eun-kyung (Republic of Korea), Minister of Environment, said that the current Administration had been receiving international attention for fostering peace on the Korean Peninsula and in North-East Asia. Her Government had also taken steps to improve sustainability and resiliency at the national level. For example, with regard to Sustainable Development Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation, in 2017 the Government had opened artificial reservoirs to address algal blooms, resulting in signs of river ecosystem recovery. Offices dedicated to managing water quality and quantity had been restructured to facilitate the integrated sustainable management of water resources. In connection with Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy, the Government had announced a new energy road map to expand renewable energy to 20 per cent by 2030 and end reliance on nuclear and coal energy sources, which accounted for 30 per cent and 35 per cent of electricity, respectively.

78. With regard to Goal 11 on sustainable cities, an urban regeneration programme had been launched to address ageing cities. Long-term, comprehensive recycling measures were being planned to reduce plastic use under Goal 12 on responsible consumption. The Government had also introduced an initiative to preserve natural capital and help relieve pressure on natural resources, in connection with Goal 15.

79. Concerning Goal 17 on partnerships, the Government was working with 23 relevant ministries and 420 experts to incorporate the Goals into its national vision. To promote participation at all levels of society, it had adopted the high-level political forum coordination mechanism for major groups and other stakeholders. In addition, the Republic of Korea participated actively in multinational discussions on sustainable societies and shared its experiences. It also collaborated with international organizations to provide support for climate change adaptation and to assist developing countries in better managing soil and preventing desertification.

80. **Mr. Gyan-Baffour** (Ghana), Minister of Planning, said that his Government had made significant strides in implementing the 2030 Agenda during the past two years; Ghanaians were living longer, more children were attending school and access to basic social services had improved. However, human development had been

uneven, and deprivations persisted. Widening inequalities, climate change and migration posed new development challenges.

81. With respect to water and sanitation, the Government was intensifying the implementation of the national water policy, the riparian buffer zone policy and the drinking water quality management framework. It was also mobilizing investments to improve infrastructure, establishing a water fund to support pro-poor pricing in urban water service delivery and scaling up the community-led total sanitation and rural sanitation model and strategy to improve household sanitation facilities.

82. Efforts were also being made to promote renewable energy, with the implementation of the Renewable Energy Act and the national energy policy. Under the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, Ghana had developed a country action plan and had implemented nationally determined contributions to prioritize sustainable energy security. The Government was also seeking to adopt a renewable energy master plan, with a view to increasing renewable energy by 10 per cent by 2030, promoting clean rural household lighting, expanding the adoption of market-based clean cooking solutions and doubling improvements in energy efficiency to 20 per cent in power plants.

83. The Ministry of Inner-City and Zongo Development had been created to address urban challenges, which included improving living conditions and socioeconomic activities in slums and inner cities. The Government was also developing initiatives to protect and promote the sustainable use of land-based resources, such as conserving mangrove forests and wetlands and mainstreaming biodiversity in development planning. Ghana reaffirmed its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

84. **Ms. Robinson-Regis** (Trinidad and Tobago), Minister of Planning and Development, said that, in order to lift humanity out of extreme poverty and steer the world onto a more sustainable and resilient path, the Sustainable Development Goals must be made relevant to the daily lives of all citizens. Accordingly, her Government had revised the 2002 national development strategy, which had been drafted with the participation of 600 representatives of Government and civil society, to bring it into line with the Goals. Under the revised strategy, Vision 2030, the Government advocated for a comprehensive, cross-cutting socioeconomic development framework and a whole-of-society approach that allowed all persons to lead healthy and productive lives.

85. The oil- and gas-based economy had made it possible to provide approximately 97 per cent of the population with access to electricity. The Government had also developed a sustainable energy road map. In addition, approximately 93 per cent of the population had access to pipe-borne water in homes and communities. To reach all 1.4 million people, the Government was developing a new national integrated water resources management policy. Furthermore, a number of government and non-government agencies had worked to develop a strong ecological code of conduct aimed at incorporating international commitments into national legislative frameworks in order to comply with international conventions and protect the country's rich biodiversity.

86. Trinidad and Tobago reaffirmed its commitment to partnering with the United Nations in working constructively towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In that connection, collaboration with the United Nations country team in Port of Spain had been invaluable. The Government remained unreservedly committed to ensuring that no one was left behind and would continue to work with all stakeholders in pursuit of sustainable development for all.

87. **Mr. Doubragne** (Chad), Minister of Economy and Development Planning, said that concerted follow-up was necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 1 on eradicating poverty. Despite security, environmental and socioeconomic challenges, his Government had begun planning for medium- and long-term development in 2015. Following the approval in July 2017 of Vision 2030: The Chad We Want and the national development plan for 2017–2021, the Government had begun implementing the 2030 Agenda. The first voluntary national review was currently being prepared, with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme, and would be presented in 2019.

88. During a recent visit to Chad, the Deputy Secretary-General had noted that vulnerable populations in the Lake Chad region were profoundly affected by the barbaric attacks of Boko Haram, which had caused mass movements of people. More than 45 million people living around Lake Chad were also impacted by climate change. As Lake Chad dried up, their means of subsistence were severely limited, and their resilience capacities were hindered.

89. Despite unprecedented economic and financial hardships, the Government was obliged to devote its limited resources to national and subregional security efforts, rather than to the achievement of the Goals. It therefore called on its financial and technical partners to

fulfil their pledges to mobilize financial recourses to fund the national development plan, which had been made at the round table held in Paris in September 2017.

90. **Ms. Diallo** (Guinea), Minister of Planning and Economic Development, said that her Government was committed to implementing sectoral strategies and policies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, as evidenced by its national socioeconomic development plan for the period 2016–2020 and by Guinea Vision 2040.

91. With regard to Goal 6 on water and sanitation, the Government aimed to expand services to provide drinking water in urban and rural areas, and to increase access from 69 per cent in 2016 to 76 per cent in 2020.

92. With regard to Goal 7 on clean, sustainable and affordable energy, the Government sought to ensure access to energy sources for the greatest number of people and to reduce dependence on fossil fuels by diversifying the energy mix and improving energy efficiency. In addition, the President of Guinea championed the development of renewable energies in Africa and was the coordinator of that initiative within the African Union.

93. With regard to Goal 17 on partnership, a meeting of the advisory group for the national socioeconomic development plan had been held in November 2017 in Paris, at which bilateral and multilateral partners, the private sector and civil society had overwhelmingly responded to requests for financing. She called on all partners to fulfil those pledges. The Government was also promoting new partnerships in order to diversify financing and obtain the resources necessary to achieve the Goals. However, progress could only be achieved by promoting governance and equitable justice, strengthening institutions and combating corruption.

94. **Mr. Harmon** (Guyana), Minister of State of the Ministry of the Presidency, said that transformation, sustainability and resilience were at the heart of national efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. The Government was working to fully integrate the 2030 Agenda and other global and regional frameworks, including the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, into its overarching national development plan — the Green State Development Strategy. The Strategy provided a long-term vision for economic, social and environmental development to improve human well-being and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks and preventing ecological scarcities.

95. Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy was a challenge for Guyana. Despite being on the cusp of becoming an oil-producing nation, the country was committed to moving away from a situation of near-total reliance on fossil fuels to a clean and renewable energy supply by 2025. The Government was therefore strongly advocating for increased amounts of solar power in the energy mix, seeking membership in the International Solar Alliance and pursuing model partnerships with Italy and Norway. In addition, Guyana had maintained extremely low rates of deforestation, in accordance with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. It would host the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention in January 2019 and trusted that all Member States would participate. Although there was no substitute for nationally owned and led initiatives, partnership would remain indispensable.

96. **Mr. Almutawa** (Bahrain), Minister for Cabinet Affairs, said that, during the high-level political forum, Bahrain had organized three events with international partners that focused on affordable housing; entrepreneurship and innovation for sustainable development; and the management of migration for sustainable, inclusive and flexible societies. Bahrain had also presented its first voluntary national review, which had incorporated the results of consultations held with all stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, the private sector and academia. Ministerial workshops had also been held to develop the work plan for 2019–2022. In order to monitor progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government had created a national information committee and a database of indices and statistics. The national action plan included 78 per cent of the Goal targets; the others had already been incorporated elsewhere or did not apply to the national context.

97. As a small island developing State, Bahrain faced a number of development challenges, including limited resources and climate change. It was therefore necessary to engage in international partnerships, as was recommended in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. His Government hoped to see more forums that would mobilize financial resources to increase gains in sustainable development. The high-level political forum provided a space for Member States to exchange experiences and best practices in that regard.

98. **Mr. Guzmán Ortiz** (Mexico), Head of the Office of the President, said that the 2030 Agenda, the Paris

Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the forthcoming Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration provided a road map to protect the planet and promote sustainable development for all of its inhabitants. The 2030 Agenda facilitated better public policies and international mechanisms that promoted horizontal coordination among Governments, vertical integration and the inclusion of all sectors of the population.

99. Mexico had presented its second voluntary national review at the current high-level political forum. Three years earlier, his Government had committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda and had since established the corresponding institutional architecture. The country was gradually making progress at the local level. While all officials, including those who had recently been elected, had committed to continuing those efforts, clusters and thematic approaches were not deemed the best way to comprehensively follow up on the Goals. Reform of the United Nations development system should uphold the indivisibility of the Goals.

100. With support from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico had presided over the first two sessions of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, which had provided an opportunity to engage in dialogue and mutual learning and identify the main challenges, many of which they had in common. The related outcome document and agreed conclusions were important regional contributions to the work of the high-level political forum.

101. The deliberative function of the Council must be strengthened so that it could effectively monitor accountability and serve as a platform to exchange best practices and promote mutual learning. Mexico was pleased to note that the high-level political forum was examining the impact of exponential technologies, especially artificial intelligence, on all the Goals. It would continue to work towards developing a comprehensive approach to the 2030 Agenda within the forum, thereby preserving the indivisible nature of the Goals and targets.

102. **Mr. Nyongolo** (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development, said that, with the use of an integrated rapid analysis tool, his Government had identified 38 targets and 58 indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals to be included in the national strategic development plan.

103. With regard to Goal 6, the Government had passed a law governing drinking water in 2015, and a number of projects were being undertaken to expand services. However, access remained below desired targets.

104. In connection with Goal 7 on energy, a law governing the electricity sector had been adopted in 2014 to facilitate access for public and private providers. Nevertheless, only approximately 19 per cent of the population had access to electricity. Under the national strategic development plan, the Government sought to raise that number to 50 per cent by 2022, 75 per cent by 2030 and 100 per cent by 2050. Hydropower facilities were also being built to meet that need.

105. With regard to Goal 11 on sustainable cities, the Government promoted public-private partnerships to address the challenge of providing adequate and affordable housing. It was also implementing reforms in the industrial sector to meet Goal 12 relating to responsible consumption and production.

106. Concerning Goal 15, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had 155 million hectares of forest cover, which was the second-largest forest on the planet, and protected areas encompassed 15 per cent of the territory. Since 2008, the Government had implemented a programme for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries. In addition, the national forest fund had been aligned with a list of special-purpose accounts, and a law on environmental protection had been adopted in 2011.

107. Lastly, with regard to Goal 17, some development programmes and projects required technical and financial assistance from partners, but efforts could be fragmented or spread too thin because of a lack of financing or coordination. Despite several initiatives that had achieved tangible results, there was still a need to improve public-private partnerships. His Government relied on support from its partners to mobilize the financial and technological resources necessary to achieve the Goals.

108. **Mr. Bergman** (Argentina), Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, said that his Government reaffirmed its commitment to follow up on its voluntary national reviews. Argentina was a candidate country to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, had a trade agreement with the European Union, was a signatory of the Paris Agreement and had committed to the 2030 Agenda.

109. Argentina was leading the transformation required to achieve sustainable development. Technical changes were necessary to move from a linear to a circular economy and sustainably use resources. There must also be a change in governance, in moving from vertical to

circular leadership. Sustainability was a human right, and the Government worked to promote dignity and a high quality of life for all people, without distinction.

110. With regard to the private sector, the international community must ensure that unsustainable practices were not profitable. It must also take up a new narrative: there was only one planet, a common home to the one human family. To that end, human rights must be incorporated into national policies.

111. **Ms. Agosto** (Argentina), Executive Secretary of the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies, said that Argentina had begun the process of aligning the 2030 Agenda with its national priorities in December 2015 and had presented its first voluntary national review in 2017. As a follow-up, Argentina had presented its first country report in June 2018, which had been drafted by a number of government agencies whose different viewpoints helped to shape sustainable development in the country. The report had also identified challenges and made recommendations for public policy and therefore served a useful monitoring tool at the national level.

112. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda must take into account the capacities and priorities of each State in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. While States must be primarily responsible for incorporating global commitments into national contexts, they could only be successful by partnering with national and international actors, including subnational governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and international organizations. Global commitments in financing, cooperation, capacity-building and technology transfer were therefore crucial, especially for developing countries.

113. For its presidency of the Group of 20, Argentina had chosen sustainable development as the primary focus of the 2018 agenda, which also emphasized concerns regarding inequality. The international community must further strengthen efforts in economic, social and environmental development to ensure that prosperity was shared broadly and equitably, and that growth was inclusive.

114. **Ms. Devakula** (Thailand), Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that strong nations were made up of resilient communities of people who believed in the values of betterment and sustainable development. In order to better achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, her Government sought to raise awareness and change behaviours among its citizens, as well as promote science, technology and innovation. Under its national development policy, the Government was working to achieve a self-sufficient economy and implement its structural policy. All people must be engaged in implementing the 2030 Agenda, which meant that integrated efforts and partnerships were crucial to achieving the Goals. The progress made by Thailand in achieving the Goals could be viewed on its website.

115. The recent ordeal in Thailand, in which 12 boys and their football coach had been trapped in a cave by flash flooding caused by climate change, had exemplified how humanity could combine its forces to overcome the obstacles that hindered the achievement of the Goals. Thanks to global partnerships and the use of science, technology and innovation, the boys had been rescued. She expressed her country's profound appreciation to all the people around the world who had supported and cooperated with her Government.

116. **Mr. Oduber** (Netherlands), Vice-Prime Minister of the Government of Aruba, said that his country strongly supported the ambitious reform agenda of the Secretary-General and was committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda, both at home and abroad.

117. The Kingdom of the Netherlands was made up of three small island developing States and a delta country that was largely below sea level. As a result, cooperation and partnership in water management were crucial. His Government strongly supported the recent initiative of the High-level Panel on Water to change the way in which water was valued and to outline an inclusive approach to the sustainable management of water resources. The Netherlands had also set the goal of achieving a fully circular economy by 2050. Rather than disposing of waste, it should be used as raw materials for new products.

118. Sustainability had proven to be a sound business practice; economic prosperity and a healthy environment could go hand in hand. The Netherlands worked with other countries around the world to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, for which it was necessary to mobilize the whole of society and involve all stakeholders, particularly youth.

119. **Ms. Clemens** (Netherlands), youth delegate, said that young people were working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals across the globe. In Berlin, a youth movement had led to the adoption of one of the most progressive bicycle laws in the world. In Senegal, young people were fighting extremism with hip-hop music. In the Netherlands, young professionals had helped to make the Paris Agreement more ambitious. Nevertheless, only 10 Member States had included youth delegates at the high-level political forum. In addition, the geographical representation among those delegates was highly unbalanced, as they

were nearly all European. There were 1.8 billion young people in the world, 90 per cent of whom lived in developing countries, and the international community had a responsibility to bring those young voices to the forum.

120. **Mr. Stormoen** (Norway), Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that implementing the 2030 Agenda was a strategic priority for his Government. Vulnerable populations were particularly impacted by conflict, fragility, the depletion of natural resources and climate change, and related crises often led to large flows of refugees and migrants. With the right policies, the international community could put an end to poverty in all its forms and ensure prosperity for coming generations.

121. Several important policy areas for his Government were anchored in the 2030 Agenda. For example, the Prime Minister had recently launched a high-level panel on building a sustainable ocean economy, and Norway was establishing a multi-donor trust fund with the World Bank to improve ocean waste management and prevent marine litter. Regarding Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, a combination of global and domestic financing was necessary to ensure that all children had access to quality education. Norway therefore encouraged partner countries to build statistical capacity and increase allocations to 20 per cent of national budgets.

122. Corruption and illicit capital flows undermined inclusive development and posed a serious threat to security. In that connection, the Government had recently established a knowledge bank for technical cooperation and a tax development programme. Given that coherent national policies would enhance the quality of international development cooperation, his Government had established a policy coherence forum with members of civil society, academia, youth and women groups, the private sector, and trade and employers' unions.

123. A strong, legitimate multilateral system was necessary to secure the values and interests inherent in the 2030 Agenda. Norway therefore applauded the steps taken by the Secretary-General to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to deliver a coherent response to sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals made it possible to seek new solutions that were not dictated by the unpredictability of the future, and Norway was heeding the call for change.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.